

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 1080

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SUBJ: POST MEMORANDUM

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1. BUJUMBURA IS AN ISOLATED COMMUNITY WITH LIMITED RECREATIONAL POSSIBILITIES, MARGINAL HEALTH FACILITIES AND RATHER PRIMITIVE COMMERCIAL SERVICES. THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE POST IS TO MAINTAIN A U.S. PRESENCE HERE AND TO SERVE LIMITED HUMANITARIAN INTERESTS. WE HAVE RECENTLY PROVIDED DEPARTMENT WITH DETAILED ANALYSIS OF OUR RELATIONS WITH GRB IN BUJUMBURA 1003 WHICH REAFFIRMS PREVIOUSLY STATED OBJECTIVES. THIS REMAINS VALID ASSESSMENT.

2. IN BRIEF, OUR RELATIONS WITH BURUNDI ARE CORRECT, BUT WORKING CONTACTS ARE LIMITED TO AN EXTREMELY NARROW RANGE OF COMMON INTERESTS,

ESSENTIALLY OUR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP. MOST OF THE NORMAL

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL, COMMERCIAL AND CONSULAR FUNCTIONS ARE AT LOW LEVELS OF ACTIVITY. CONTACT WITH BURUNDIS, PRIVATE OR OFFICIAL, IS FILTERED THROUGH THE PROTOCOL OFFICE OF MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS WHICH RULES OUT ANY CONTACT BEYOND THE OFFICIAL, ALMOST THE CEREMONIAL LEVEL. AS A RESULT, THE BASIS FOR POLITICAL
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ANALYSIS IS LIMITED TO RUMOR, OCCASIONAL HARD INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN OR MISSIONARY SOURCES AND A RUDIMENTARY PRESS. IN ANY EVENT, BURUNDI POLITICS CONSIST OF MURKY CONSPIRATORIAL IN-FIGHTING AMONG TUTSI FACTIONS WHICH IS ALMOST INDECIPHERABLE FOR AN OUTSIDER, AND MAYBE THE INSIDERS AS WELL. ECONOMIC REPORTING IS SOMEWHAT EASIER SINCE THERE ARE EUROPEAN ADVISORS IN KEY POSITIONS WHO MAINTAIN THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND ARE

WILLING TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS. EVEN THERE, HOWEVER, STATISTICS ARE REGULARLY LATE. WHILE WE HAVE NO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS AT THE MOMENT, OUR RELATIONS WITH GRB ARE COMPLICATED BY THE SUSPICIOUSNESS OF OFFICIALS FROM CUSTOMS INSPECTORS TO THE MOFA PROTOCOL STAFF AND THE PREDILECTION OF BUREAUCRATS AT ALL LEVELS TO AVOID TAKING ANY RESPONSIBILITY WHENEVER POSSIBLE. AS NOTED IN BUJUMBURA 1003 WE CANNOT EXPECT RAPID PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVES OF EXERTING INFLUENCE TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS AND AVOID FURTHER VIOLENCE IN BURUNDI.

3. ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL. U.S. INVESTMENTS ARE LIMITED TO SOMETHING OVER A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS IN FACILITIES FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND PART INTEREST IN A COMMERCIAL BANK. THE U.S. BUYS AROUND 45 PCNT OF BURUNDI'S COFFEE EXPORTS

(\$40 MILLION IN 1977), BUT U.S. EXPORTS TO BURUNDI ARE MARGINAL. THE LOCAL MARKET IS TOO SMALL TO INTEREST EITHER U.S. INVESTORS OR TRADERS, IN GENERAL, ALTHOUGH AN OCCASIONAL GOVERNMENT TENDER ATTRACTS A RESPONSE. THE GRB HAS CONTRACTED TO BUY A BOEING 737 FOR 1980 DELIVERY.

4. CONSULAR. CONSULAR OPERATIONS IN BUJUMBURA ARE MODEST. WE ISSUED 128 NIV'S IN FY 77, AND PASSPORT, REGISTRATION AND OTHER SERVICES FOR THE APPROXIMATELY 100 AMERICANS OF THE MISSIONARY COMMUNITY MAKE UP THE BULK OF CONSULAR ACTIVITIES.

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5. ADMINISTRATION. WE HAVE REITERATED OUR REQUEST FOR A GSO (BUJUMBURA 1032). WE WILL ALSO NEED TO REVISE OUR LOCAL COMPENSATION PLAN IN THE COMING YEAR AND WILL NEED SUPPORT FOR THIS. WE HAVE HAD SIGNIFICANT GAPS BETWEEN DEPARTURES OF STAFF MEMBERS AND THE ARRIVAL OF THEIR REPLACEMENTS SO THAT CONTINUITY AND ORGANIZATION HAVE SUFFERED PERIODICALLY.

6. OTHER AGENCY RELATIONSHIPS. A PAO HAS JUST ARRIVED TO RESUME THE USICA PROGRAM DROPPED IN 1973. AID IS JUST BEGINNING ITS PROGRAM WITH THE FIRST PROJECT AGREEMENT SIGNED IN AUGUST. WE HAVE NEITHER SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF VIEW WITH THE OTHER AGENCIES' PROGRAMS NOR OVERSIGHT PROBLEMS.
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